

**Remarks by Ambassador Zumwalt
GIE Waki Lari
Bandafassi, Kedougou
Thursday, January 28, 2016**

(As prepared)

Asalamu Alekum!
Mr. Prefect of Bandafassi,
Mr. Mayor of Bandafassi,
Mme. President of GIE Waki Lari,
Members of the Bandaffasi community,

Thank you for the warm welcome. I am delighted to be here today to visit the community of Bandafassi and join the GIE Waki Lari to inaugurate this baobab processing project.

This is my first visit to Kedougou. I have been very impressed with your abundant forest and agriculture resources. I have visited several communities where USAID and Peace Corps Volunteers are supporting community groups in developing these resources.

Through the inauguration of this project, we celebrate our partnership with local communities. Through the Ambassador's Special-Self Help Fund, the U.S. Government has worked for many years with communities across the country to support schools, health centers, and other projects. These projects harness the initiative of community groups.

I am particularly pleased to inaugurate this project because it represents a partnership between Kedougou community groups and Senegalese agricultural processing companies. Through a partnership with Bioessence, GIE Waki Lari supplies materials to produce soap, beauty products, and dietary supplements. Bioessence has worked hard to export many of these products to the United States. So the next time I travel to the United States, I will look for Bioessence products that contain high-quality processed baobab products from Bandafassi.

I would like to congratulate the GIE Waki Lari and the people of Bandafassi for their initiative to develop this business. I wish you great success in building on this achievement.

Albaraka! (thank you)